

is the ejector seat, an example of which is described in this issue. The Martin-Baker has been very thoroughly tested, and was demonstrated at the recent Gatwick Display. It goes a long way towards providing the pilot with a means of escape, but as aircraft speeds go up and approach Mach numbers of 1 or over, even this clever device may prove inadequate.

America has done a good deal more piloted high-speed research flying than we have, and the subject of pilot-safety is being given considerable attention. At the annual summer meeting of the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences in Los Angeles, two Douglas test pilots gave their views. Gene May, who has done all the research flying on the D-558 Skystreak, dealt with many aspects of high-speed flight, and on the subject of escape he expressed himself in favour of the jettisonable cockpit, while Russell Thaw suggested that for speeds at Mach number around 2, the pilot should be housed in a cell unit capable of being projected away from the aircraft by the pressing of a button, and provided with a parachute large enough to land the cell at a reasonable impact speed.

The difficulties of achieving this would obviously be very great indeed, but the problems must be given very serious consideration, not only for the benefit of the test pilots who have to make the early flights but for the fighter pilots who will follow.

Nationalization ?

POLITICAL circles have recently been discussing a rumour that certain sections of the community are preparing a drive for the nationalization of the British aircraft industry. So far, the advocates of such a policy have not come out into the open, but to be forewarned is to be forearmed. It is easy enough to assess the quarters from which such a suggestion would be likely to come, but it is to be hoped that the Government will be strong enough to resist giving in to the demand, if and when it is voiced.

To the half-instructed it would appear entirely logical

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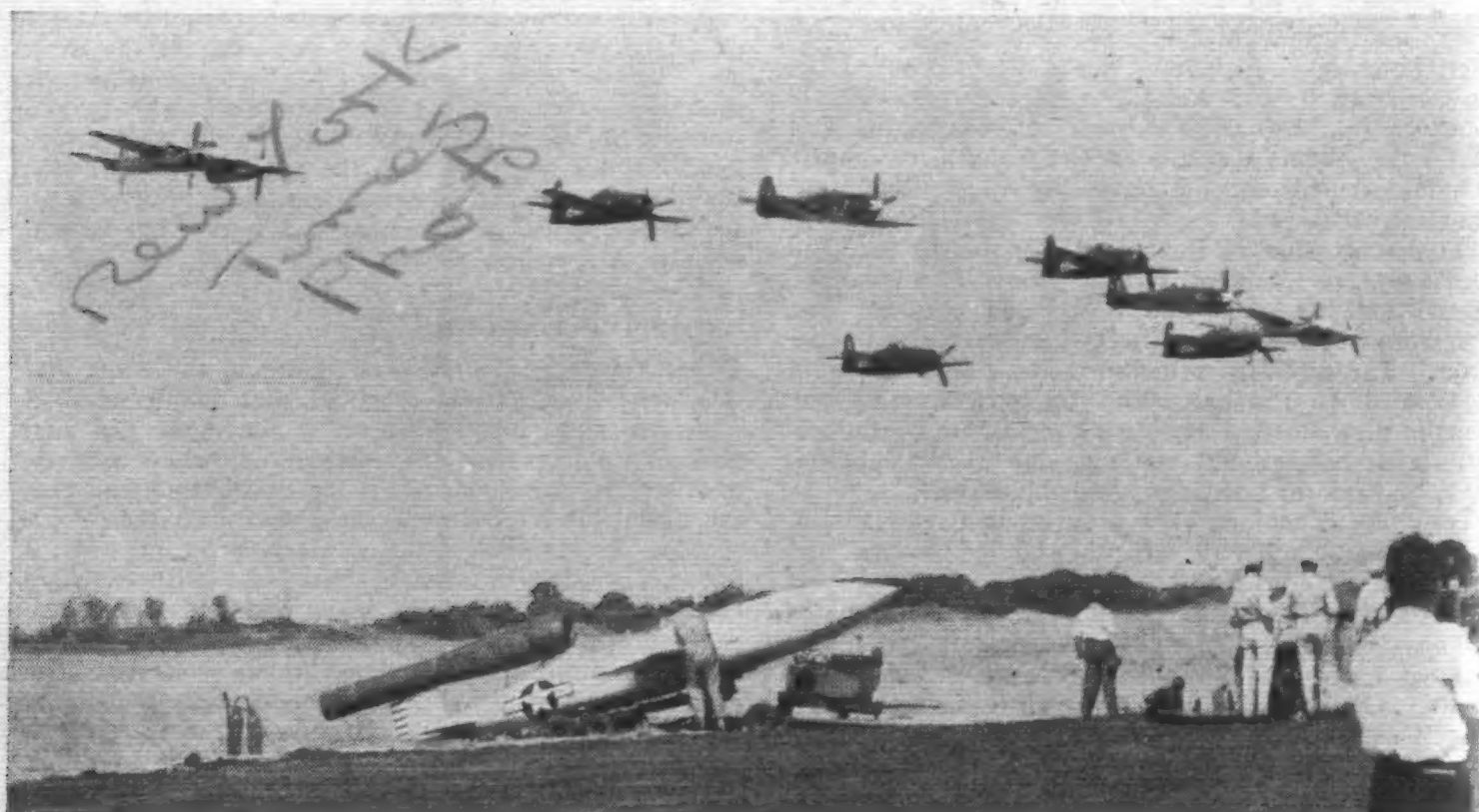
that since civil aviation is already nationalized, and since the main customer of the aircraft industry for military aircraft is the Government, nationalization would be a natural step.

There is, of course, only a superficial similarity between the two cases. Civil aviation, by its very nature, is largely international, and international regulations have to be agreed at Government level. Consequently a case for nationalization could be made out—and was.

Manufacture of aircraft is, however, a very different problem. Few of those who now urge nationalization are probably old enough to remember the early days, when the Royal Aircraft Factory (now the R.A.E.) at Farnborough competed with the industry. The result was not happy. Times have changed, but initiative and efficiency are still the great essentials, and nationalization is not calculated to encourage either.

Memories are inclined to be short, and for the benefit of those who have by now forgotten what happened in France a few years before the war, it may be recalled that when the French aircraft industry was nationalized, aircraft production almost vanished, so that France started the war with a pitifully small number of modern aircraft.

Let the lesson of what happened in France be taken to heart.



SPLICED : Grumman Bearcats of the U.S. Navy get together with de Havilland Sea Hornets and Hawker Sea Furies of the visiting British squadron on the last day of the International Air Exposition in New York. Our pilots found many kindred spirits among the Americans. A development of the Fi 103 ("V-1") flying bomb seen in the foreground puts Germany in the picture.